BATMAN™ & THE JOKER™
THE DEADLY DUO

DC BLACK LABEL

BOOK TWO

MARC SILVESTRI - ARIF PRIANTO

AGES 17+
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THE DARK KNIGHT VS. HELL'S ELITE SOLDIER

BATMAN SPAWN

WRITTEN BY
TODD McFARLANE

ART BY
GREG CAPULLO & TODD McFARLANE

A BLOCKBUSTER PRESTIGE FORMAT ONE-SHOT

DECEMBER

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STORY AND ART

MARC SILVESTRI

COLORS

ARIF PRIANTO

LETTERS

TROY PETERI

SPECIAL THANKS TO

MATT HAWKINS

SPECIAL THANKS TO

BRIDGET SILVESTRI

CARL?

...CARL, HONEY? ARE YOU THERE?

DADDY, I'M SCARED!

QUIT SCREWIN' AROUND, DOC. YOU KNOW THE DRILL. EITHER **YOU** START CUTTING, OR I WILL.

PLEASE, I...I--

I...I CAN'T.

YOU HAVE TO...

CARL...

...YOU NEED TO STAY STRONG...

...**HE'LL** FIND US.

...HE'LL **FIND** US, CARL...

BUT WE NEED TO BUY SOME TIME.

DO IT.

I... OH, GOD... ***JIM***...

...I'M SO SORRY.

CLIK

WHRRRRRRRR

BATMAN & THE JOKER
THE DEADLY DUO

YOU'RE NEVER GONNA FIND GORDON, BATS...

...AND DON'T BOTHER GETTING ALL SWEATY BEATING IT OUTTA ME 'CAUSE EVEN I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS.

BUT I'LL TELL YA WHAT I DO KNOW--THE LONGER WE BLAB OUT HERE, THE LESS OF HIM THERE'LL BE TO FIND.

NOW CUT ME LOOSE AND LET'S GO FIGHT SOME CRIME, PARTNER--AND BY CRIME, I MEAN THE ONE BEING PERPETRATED AGAINST ME.

I FRISK HIM AND FIND THE USUAL NONSENSE: A PLASTIC DECODER RING, YARN, A SET OF WIND-UP CHATTERING TEETH, AND THREE PAPER CLIPS. I ALSO FIND AN ITEM MOST PEOPLE WOULD HAVE, BUT NOT THE JOKER.

WHAT IS THIS?

I BELIEVE THE KIDS CALL IT A "PHONE."

JOKER.

OKAY, OKAY. JEEZ. SOME GUY DELIVERED IT TO ME. I'M SUPPOSED TO GET MESSAGES TELLING ME TO DO THINGS.

WHAT KINDS OF THINGS?

BREEEEEE

PROXIMITY ALERT FROM THE DRONES.

THIS CONFIRMS MY SUSPICION THERE WAS MORE THAN ONE ASSAILANT.

SHUCK

SHUCK

SUPERIOR NUMBERS...

...IMPRESSIVE STRENGTH...

GRAAARRRR!

HSSSSSSS!

...BUT UNDISCIPLINED...

WHUDD

...UNCOORDINATED...

...AND THEN THERE'S *THE JOKER.*

YO, BATS! I KNOW I'M KINDA NEW AT "HEROING," BUT DO YOU THINK YOU COULD GIVE ME A HAND SO I CAN, Y'KNOW...*USE* MY *HANDS?*

SNIT

THOUGHT YOU COULD MESS WITH GOTHAM'S MOST AWE-INSPIRING *CRIME-STOPPERS,* EH, HANDSOME? WELL...

...THE *CHOKE'S* ON YOU! *HAHAHA!*

I CAN'T BREAK THEIR BONES...

...BUT HITTING SOFT TISSUE MIGHT SLOW THEM DOWN.

SHLK

TIMBERRRRRRRR!

I HAVE TO END THIS. I TRIGGER THE DRONES.

TARGETING ERROR... TARGETING ERROR.

CLOSE-QUARTER COMBAT IS CONFUSING THEIR ***TRACKING*** SYSTEMS...

SENSORS CAN'T DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN THESE CREATURES AND THE JOKER...BIOMETRIC SIGNATURES ARE NEARLY IDENTICAL.

HEY, IT'S BEEN A REAL GAS BUT MY ***TEAMMATE*** NEEDS ME, SO... ALLEY...

WE'RE ON OUR OWN.

TUNNNGGGG

...OOPS?

WHOA! HEY, BATS...

THE JOKER IS THE MOST DANGEROUS MADMAN I'VE EVER ENCOUNTERED.

HE'S ENDED COUNTLESS LIVES. I COULD LET HIM FALL AND BE RID OF HIM FOREVER...

...LITTLE HELP?

...BUT NO ONE DIES ON MY WATCH. AND...

SO DANGLING ME FROM A ROOF IS GONNA BE A *THING* WITH US NOW?

...HE STILL HAS GORDON.

CHMP

NNNNNGH!

SHUNK

WOOHOOOOO!

HA! DYING! WHAT A NOVEL ESCAPE PLAN!

YOU'RE MY KINDA CRAZY, BATS!

CHUFF

SPAKT

Ron Boyd

SNIPT

UHNNN...

THAT LOOKS KINDA NASTY. GIMME A HEADS-UP IF YOU HAVE ANY SUDDEN CRAVINGS FOR HUMAN FLESH, 'KAY?

PLASMA BATTERIES TO POWER...

"...TURBINES TO SPEED...

"...ENGAGE DUAL OCCUPANT MODE...AND INTERCEPT."

EASY, PARTNER... HEY, LOOK, THERE'S OUR *FRIEND!*

LOOKING GOOD, SPORT! DIGGING THE WHOLE "I FELL TWENTY STORIES AND LANDED ON MY FACE" VIBE!

GETTING DIFFICULT...TO BREATHE...LEGS FEEL LIKE LEAD.

WHAT NOW, BATS? DO WE HAIL A "BATCAB"? CALL A "SUPER-UBER"?

VROOOMMM

...WAIT, *WHAT?* YOU CALL AND IT JUST SHOWS UP?

CAN IT DO ANY *OTHER* TRICKS? LIKE, CAN IT ROLL OVER AND PLAY *DEAD?*

PHSSSSSS

GET IN.

HOW? LEAP OVER THE TOP? SLIDE ACROSS THE HOOD?

GET. IN.

WOW! LOOK AT ALL THESE *BUTTONS!* WHAT'S THIS BIG *RED* ONE DO?

DON'T TOUCH *ANYTHING...*

EMERGENCY ACTION ZF...

HEY, UM...WE GOTTA PULL OVER, BATS. BATS? *GREAT...*

YO, *BATCAR...*

STRAITJACKET? *HAHA!* IT'S LIKE ARKHAM ON WHEELS!

CLIKT

CLAK CLAK

...35... 6...7... HHHHHHNNN.

"...ENGAGE TOILET MODE!"

YOU'VE HEARD THE SAYING ABOUT "STRANGE BEDFELLOWS," MISS QUINN? IT SEEMS YOUR BOYFRIEND HAS A NEW ALLY--THE BATMAN.

SCRITCH SCRITCH

NOTHING TO SAY? DOES IT BOTHER YOU THAT THE MAN YOU SAID WAS GOING TO BURST IN HERE LIKE "A PASTY-FACED RAMBO" IS RUNNING AROUND GOTHAM WITH BATMAN WHILE YOU ROT HERE WITH THE REST OF THE GARBAGE?

IT WOULD CERTAINLY BOTHER ME.

SCRITCH SCRITCH SCRITCH

HEY, SOON-TO-DIE-HORRIBLY PERSON, YOU GOT ANY MORE OF THESE RIBS? THE BEEFY ONES...

SCRITCH SCRITCH

MONKEY'S RIB SHACK

...WITH THE BIG BONES?

PHOO

CHAPTER TWO

TEETH

HE'S COMING AROUND.

THERE'S OUR BUNDLE OF SUNSHINE!

GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK, MASTER **BRUCE**, YOU PROVIDED US WITH **QUITE** A SCARE.

HOW LONG WAS I OUT?

FOURTEEN HOURS, A GOOD DEAL OF IT WITH A HIGH FEVER.

I'VE NEVER SEEN AN INFECTION SPREAD THAT **QUICKLY** AND BE SO RESISTANT TO ANTIBIOTICS. IT WAS ALL A BIT DODGY. EVEN **AFTER** WE REMOVED THE FOREIGN BODY.

WHAT FOREIGN BODY?

A TOOTH EMBEDDED IN YOUR SHOULDER. NOT MY BEST PATCH-UP WORK, I'M AFRAID. LITTLE BUGGER DID **NOT** WANT TO COME OUT.

WE ISOLATED IT AND PLACED IT IN A **COLD STORAGE SOLUTION.** IT'S PRETTY GRUESOME. FIGURED YOU'D WANT TO TAKE A LOOK AT IT.

I DEFINITELY DO, **DICK.** BUT FIRST...

...WHERE IS HE?

LIGHTS.

KCHUNK

PSHSSSSS

ABOUT TIME, BATS. I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK YOU DIDN'T **LOVE** ME ANYMORE. OH, AND I HAD A **LOT** OF ICED TEA EARLIER TODAY, SO...

"...YOU MIGHT WANNA GRAB SOME TOWELS."

HOLY FULL MOON-- IT'S GROWN ANOTHER TOOTH. WHAT WERE YOU FIGHTING, BRUCE, **WEREWOLVES?**

NO, BUT THE DATA COMING IN ON THE TISSUE SAMPLE IS JUST AS UNBELIEVABLE.

THIS SAMPLE HAS **JOKER'S** DNA, A SECOND GENETIC SIGNATURE FROM A **DIFFERENT** DONOR, AND THERE APPEARS TO BE A **THIRD** COMPONENT THAT WE **MISSED** BEFORE.

A THIRD? YEAH, I'M STICKING WITH WEREWOLVES.

COMPUTER, WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE THIRD COMPONENT?

It is **synthetic** and bonded to existing **organic** structures, with the resulting **new** structure containing a **fourth** nucleotide...

...not nitrogenous base, pentose, or phosphate... unknown origin and type.

This **triple helix** has no known precedent.

INTERESTING. SHOW A SAMPLE CELL.

BIOLOGY WAS NEVER MY THING, BUT EVEN I KNOW THAT'S NOT RIGHT.

IT ISN'T.

COMPUTER, WHAT IS THE SUBSTANCE BONDING THESE CELLS?

Adhesion molecules consisting of carbon and polyethylene oxide atoms.

CARBON FIBER. LIVING CELLS LITERALLY BONDED TOGETHER WITH CARBON FIBER MOLECULES...THIS SHOULDN'T BE POSSIBLE.

MAG X400

CAN WE JUST PAUSE THIS HORROR MOVIE FOR A SEC, BRUCE?

SOMEBODY CREATED ***SYNTHETIC DNA*** AND FIGURED OUT HOW TO COMBINE IT WITH ***NORMAL*** DNA TO CREATE AN ENTIRELY ***NEW*** ORGANISM?

IT'S LOOKING THAT WAY, DICK. A ***TECHNO-ORGANIC*** STRUCTURE. ALSO INTERESTING IS THAT THE DATA IS POINTING TO SOME PRETTY RADICAL STUDIES I'VE SEEN INVOLVING STEM CELL RESEARCH.

SPECIFICALLY, CELL TYPES WITH INNATE REGENERATIVE PROPERTIES. THIS WOULD EXPLAIN THE RAPID HEALING WE'VE WITNESSED. SOME OF THIS RESEARCH SHOWED PROMISE COMBATING CERTAIN FORMS OF CANCER...

...BUT THE CARBON FIBER ELEMENT MAKES NO SENSE. YOU WOULDN'T NEED THE ADDITIONAL TENSILE STRENGTH TO TREAT AN ILLNESS...BUT YOU MIGHT IF YOU WERE LOOKING TO ADAPT THE TECHNOLOGY ELSEWHERE.

GREAT, SO SOME ***NUTJOB*** IS OUT THERE ***MAKING*** PEOPLE...

...AND IT ALL HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH ***HIM?***

I DON'T KNOW, BUT UNTIL I FIND OUT, HE ***STAYS*** HERE.

HMM. HMM. HMMM.

MASTER BRUCE, REMEMBER YOU HAVE A MEETING WITH THE WAYNE/SIMMS FOUNDATION.

ALFRED--

HMM HMM HMMM...

AND NEED I REMIND YOU, SIR, THAT YOU ***MISSED*** THE PREVIOUS TWO?

...DIGGING THE ***DANCING QUEEN!***

NO, ALFRED...

"...YOU DO NOT."

WHERE THE *HELL* IS WAYNE?

CALM DOWN, *SIMMS,* THAT THROBBING VEIN IN YOUR FOREHEAD IS DISTRACTING.

MAYBE *YOU'RE* FINE WITH WAYNE'S "PLAYBOY" TIME SCHEDULE, *PETER,* BUT IT'S A SLAP IN THE FACE TO THOSE OF US THAT *WORK* FOR A LIVING...

...AND YOU CAN JOKE ALL YOU WANT, BUT WHEN I WIN THE GOVERNORSHIP THIS FALL, YOU, YOUR PAL WAYNE, THE GOTHAM POLICE, AND ESPECIALLY *BATMAN* WILL ALL WIND UP IN FRONT OF A *JUDICIAL HEARING.*

THE *POLLS* SAY MY JOB IS PRETTY SAFE, SIMMS. AND YOUR THREATS DON'T SCARE ME.

...AND *WHEN* DID YOU SAY YOU WERE LEAVING ON VACATION?

YOUR PRECIOUS GEM COLLECTION SOUNDS *FABULOUS,* MR. BENSON...

THE POLLS SHOW ME GAINING, PETER, AND I... I...AH...

...AH...

FOR GOD'S SAKE, SIMMS, USE A HANDKER--

CHOOO!

--CHIEF.

BLESS YOU.

SNURFF! MS. **KYLE,** I SPECIFICALLY TOLD YOU **NOT** TO BRING YOUR **CAT** TO MEETINGS!

SORRY TO INTERRUPT. **DICK GRAYSON.** MR. WAYNE SENDS HIS APOLOGIES BUT HE WAS CALLED AWAY ON ANOTHER MATTER. HE ASKED ME TO CHAIR THE MEETING IN HIS STEAD.

THAT WAS PICKLES. **THIS** IS MONKEY. BESIDES, MR. WAYNE **LIKES** MY KITTIES. AND THIS IS **HIS** BUILDING.

WELL, WAYNE ISN'T HERE. AND HE BETTER HAVE ONE HELL OF A GOOD REASON WHY BECAUSE I SWEAR TO GOD, I'LL--

AHEM...

...

OOPSIE!

WHITE-FACED MONSTER NINJAS, BLOOD ALL OVER THE STREET AND ROOFTOPS, AND LET'S NOT FORGET THE FACT WITNESSES SAW ***THE JOKER*** GETTING INTO YOUR CAR...

...AND TO TOP IT OFF, TWO MORE HEADLESS BODIES WERE FOUND, ONE A COP.

MEDIA'S GOIN' NUTS, BATMAN. PEOPLE'RE TOO SCARED TO LEAVE THEIR HOMES...

...AND JUST A FEW HOURS AGO A BOX WAS DELIVERED TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS. WE THOUGHT IT WAS A BOMB...INSIDE WAS A SEVERED FINGER...

...AND A NOTE ADDRESSED TO ***YOU,*** FROM "J." YOU WANNA TELL ME JUST WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?

IT'S ***COMPLICATED,*** BULLOCK. THERE ARE SOME THINGS I NEED TO LOOK INTO.

LOOK, I KNOW WE'RE NOT DRINKIN' BUDDIES OR ANYTHING, BUT I THINK I'VE EARNED SOME ***TRUST*** OVER THE YEARS.

I'LL BE IN TOUCH.

AND BULLOCK...THAT FINGER IS ***JIM GORDON'S.***

AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER TURNED HIS STEEL MILL INTO A RECYCLING PLANT.

THE PLANT HAS BEEN SHUTTERED SINCE THE GREAT DEPRESSION... SMOKE SHOULDN'T BE COMING FROM THE FURNACES.

WHEN I WAS A BOY, I WOULD SNEAK AWAY TO EXPLORE THESE RUINS AND LOOK FOR GHOSTS. LIGHT IS COMING FROM A BUILDING I USED TO THINK WAS HAUNTED.

THE SATELLITE PHONE GIVEN TO THE JOKER IS DIFFICULT TO TRACK. USEFUL IN WAR ZONES.

A TEXT WAS SENT TO THE JOKER TO COME HERE.

Wayne recycling plant north of Gotham. Midnigh

ANOTHER TEXT...THIS TIME TO *ME*.

Wayne recycling plant north of Gotham. Midnight.

Hello Batman. What a pleasant surprise. Please come in.

I TAKE THE BAIT.

WELCOME...

...TO THE GRAND REOPENING OF WAYNE RECYCLING.

WHERE IS THE JOKER?

I HAVE HIM.

I HAD A TASK FOR HIM. ARE YOU TAKING HIS PLACE?

NO.

THEN WHY ARE YOU HERE?

CURIOSITY.

AH...

...THEN YOU'LL WANT TO GO THROUGH THAT DOOR...

...AND MIND THE CHILDREN...

...THEY CAN BE... EXCITABLE.

THE METAL DOOR SLAMS SHUT, AND LOCKS BEHIND ME.

THE GRINDING SOUND OF LONG-DEAD MACHINERY RETURNING TO LIFE FILLS THE VOID.

ALLOW ME TO **ILLUMINATE** YOUR... CURIOSITY.

SHUNK

OH MY GOD! HELP!

HELP US, PLEASE!

LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO WILLIAM AND LISA GREY...PARENTS OF A YOUNG SON NAMED THOMAS.

ONE OF THEM HAS TO **DIE** TONIGHT. TO GET WHAT HE **WANTED**, THE JOKER WAS TO DECIDE WHICH.

ON THE FLOOR IN FRONT OF YOU ARE DOCUMENTS I PROVIDED TO HELP HIM MAKE THE PROPER DECISION ON WHO SHOULD LIVE, AND WHO SHOULD DIE...HE WAS WARNED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF HE DIDN'T SHOW.

NOW HE **WON'T** GET WHAT HE WANTS, AND THEY'LL **ALL** DIE. INCLUDING THE BOY.

WAIT... **I'LL** TAKE THE JOKER'S PLACE. **I'LL** DECIDE.

VERY WELL, BATMAN. NOW YOU HAVE **MY** CURIOSITY. YOU HAVE FIFTEEN MINUTES.

STARTING... **NOW.**

BREEP

BREEP

BREEP

BREEP

·ALERT·
ANOMALY RECOGNIZED
·ALERT·
RAPID CELLULAR ACTIVITY DETECTED
·ALERT·
RECOMMEND IMMEDIATE QUARANTINE PROTOCOLS
·ALERT·

BREEP
BREEP
BREEP

BREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

·ALERT·
ANOMALY RECOGNIZED
·ALERT·
RAPID CELLULAR ACTIVITY DETECTED
·ALERT·
RECOMMEND IMMEDIATE QUARANTINE PROTOCOLS
·ALERT·

CRKKK

TO BE CONTINUED...

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MARC SILVESTRI

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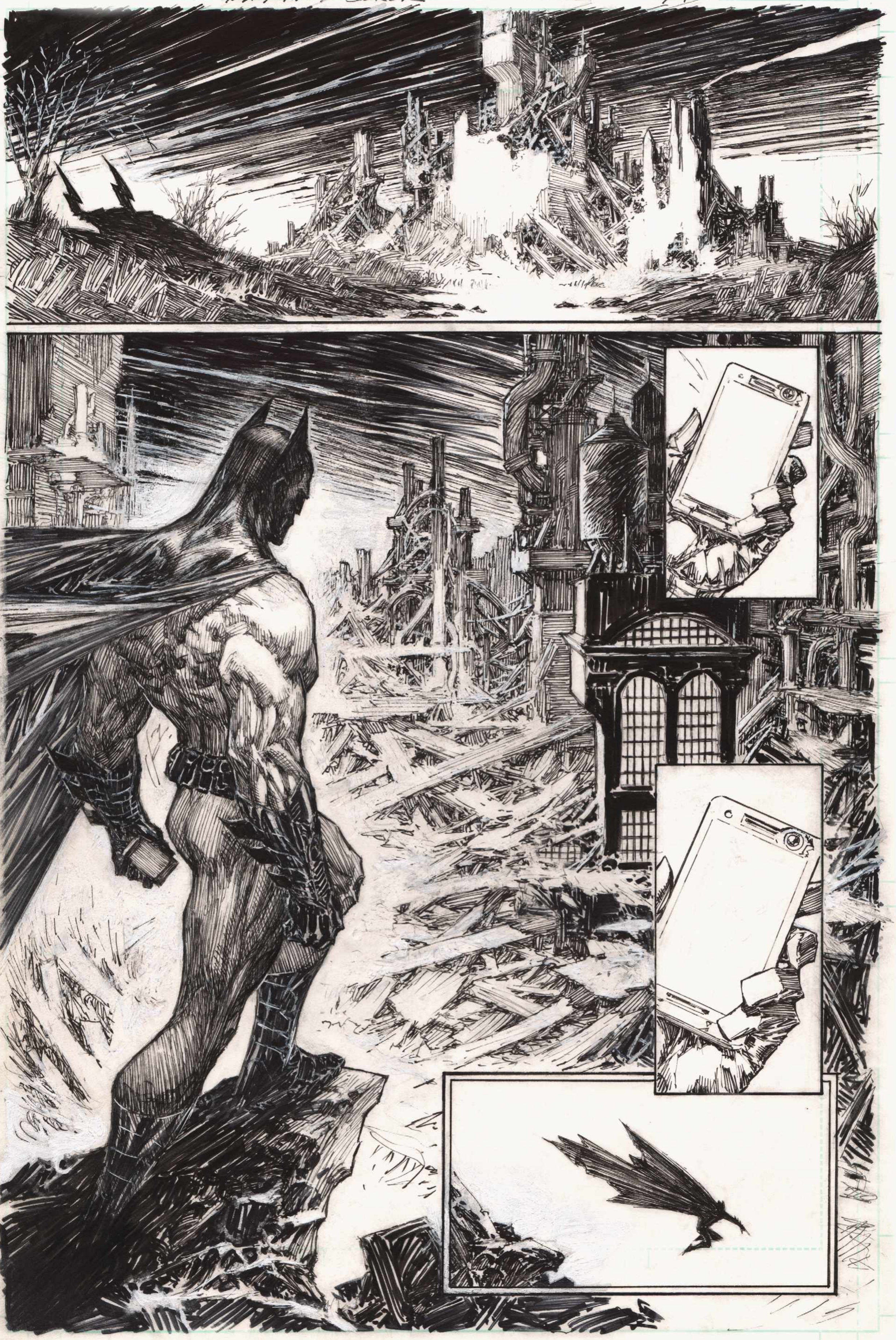

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JOINING THE JUSTICE LEAGUE IS EVERY HERO'S DREAM. UNTIL IT'S A NIGHTMARE.

DANGER STREET

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Written by
TOM KING

Art by
JORGE FORNÉS

December

12 issues from the creative team of *Rorschach*

DC BLACK LABEL

AGES 17+

COVER
MARC SILVESTRI & ARIF PRIANTO

BATMAN & THE JOKER VARIANT COVERS
KELLEY JONES & MICHELLE MADSEN

1:25 VARIANT COVER
YANICK PAQUETTE & NATHAN FAIRBAIRN

1:50 VARIANT COVER
MARC SILVESTRI

1:100 VARIANT COVER
CHRISTOPHER MITTEN

BATMAN CREATED BY
BOB KANE WITH BILL FINGER

EDITORS
BEN MEARES
& ROB LEVIN

GROUP EDITOR
CHRIS CONROY

PUBLICATION DESIGN
DARRAN ROBINSON

PUBLICATION PRODUCTION
SANDY ALONZO

Marie Javins Editor-in-Chief, DC Comics

Anne DePies Senior VP – General Manager
Jim Lee Publisher & Chief Creative Officer
Don Falletti VP – Manufacturing Operations & Workflow Management
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–BATMAN

The Last Kryptonian-DCP